

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the thorough review by the Examiner. The Examiner rejected claims 1-27. The Examiner rejected claim 1-18 and 20-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Examiner rejected claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,340,672 to Mihalik.

Applicants have currently amended claims 1, 18, 21, 22, 25, and 27; cancelled claims 19-20; and added new claims 28-34. The Examiner rejected independent claims 1 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, and claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). The Examiner presumably rejected the remainder of the claims as depending on or referencing claim 1, 19, or 21. As each of claims 1, 19, and 21 have been amended or cancelled, Applicants submit that every claim currently pending in the application is in condition for allowance.

The Claims as Currently Amended Comply with the Written Description Requirement

Claim 1 has been currently amended to remove the language that the Examiner indicated formed the basis of the § 112, first paragraph rejection. Claim 1 now reads similarly to claim 1 of copending Application No. 10/637,807, which the Examiner indicated was allowable subject to a nonstatutory double patenting rejection over the claims of the present application. Further, Applicants note that claims 17 and 18 of the present application read substantially identically to claims 12 and 14 of copending Application No. 10/637,807, which the Examiner indicated were allowable subject to a nonstatutory double patenting rejection over the claims of the present application. Support for claim 1 and its dependent claims as currently presented include paragraphs 005-009, 0020-0028, and examples 1-2 (paragraphs 0034-0091) of the application as filed.

Claim 21 has been currently amended to remove the language that the Examiner indicated formed the basis of the § 112, first paragraph rejection. Support for claim 21 as

currently presented includes paragraphs 0021, 0027-0028, and examples 1-2 (paragraphs 0034-0091) of the application as filed. More specifically, support for step (A) includes paragraph 0040. Support for step (B) includes paragraphs 0028 and 0043. Support for step (C) includes paragraphs 0027 and 0061.

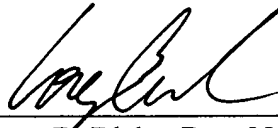
New claims 28-34 are fully supported by the application as filed. Support for claim 28 includes paragraphs 0021, 0028, and examples 3-4 (paragraphs 0092-00139) of the application as filed. More specifically, support for claim 28, step (A) includes paragraphs 0021, 0097, and 00122. Support for claim 28, step (B) includes paragraphs 0028, 0098, and 00123. Support for claim 28, step (C) includes paragraphs 00114 and 00139. Support for claim 29 includes paragraphs 0024, 00126, 00132, and 00139. Support for claim 30 includes paragraphs 0024, 00115, and 00139. Support for claim 31 includes paragraph 005. Support for claim 32 includes paragraphs 0021, 0097, and 00122. Support for claim 33 includes paragraphs 0028-0029, 0098, and 00123. Support for claim 34 includes paragraphs 0021, 0024, 0028, 0097-0098, 00114-00115, 00122-00123, and 00139.

Claims 22, 25, and 27 were amended to improve clarity, and the amendments thereto are not intended to affect claim scope.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-18 and 21-34 are all in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application and allowance of all claims are respectfully requested, and Applicants respectfully request the issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



Date: November 13, 2006

Corey B. Blake, Reg. No. 52,624
BRACEWELL & GIULIANI LLP
P.O. Box 61389
Houston, Texas 77208-1389
Telephone: (713) 221-1515
Facsimile: (713) 222-3215
Corey.blake@bracewellgiuliani.com
Attorney for Applicants